



ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL DEFINITION & STATUS

Arizona Department of Education, Research & Evaluation Division

Why Modify Definition and Process?

- Alternative status dictates which A-F Letter Grade model is used to hold schools accountable.
 - The Alternative A-F Letter Grade is contingent on the other schools that are in that model since we use a distribution scale.
- Credit Recovery Alternative Schools will be exempt from the Title 1 Focus school criterion of low graduation rate for traditional schools. This exemption does not exclude them from:
 1. the Title 1 achievement criteria for Focus schools nor
 2. the Focus schools criteria for Title 1 Alternative schools.
- Our current process does not have procedures in place to verify the student population

Current Definition & Requirements

1. The educational program and related student services of the school must match the mission or charter of the school.
2. The school must intend to serve students exclusively in one or more of the following categories:
 - Students with behavioral issues (documented history of disruptive behavior)
 - Students identified as dropouts
 - Students in poor academic standing who are either severely behind on academic credits (more than one year) or have a demonstrated pattern of failing grades
 - Pregnant and/or parenting students
 - Adjudicated youth
3. Any school offering secondary instruction for academic credit used to fulfill the Arizona State Board of Education graduation requirements (in part or in full) must offer a diploma of high school graduation.
4. Schools must have current year AIMS test scores to apply for and receive alternative school status.

CRITERIA AND GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

Criteria and Guidance

Criteria

1. A district school has adopted a mission statement that clearly identifies its purpose is to serve a specific student population that will benefit from an alternative school setting or a charter school that expressly states in their charter that its purpose is to serve a specific student population that will benefit from an alternative school setting.

Guidance

This is a required document for both district schools and charter schools. The charter holder's sponsor (e.g., ASBCS, local school district, university or community college) will verify that a charter school's mission and charter coincide and that the charter specifically states serving this student population prior to receiving alternative status.

Supporting documentation of this criterion may be the school report card, the school's charter contract, the strategic plan, the school Improvement Plan, a Student-Parent Handbook, various school marketing materials (e.g., webpage or brochure), etc.

Criteria and Guidance

Criteria

2. The educational program and related student support services of the school must align with the mission and charter (if applicable) of the school.
3. Schools offering secondary instruction for academic credit used to fulfill the Arizona State Board of Education graduation requirements (in part or in full) must offer a high school diploma of graduation.

Guidance

An entity shall not be considered a school for accountability purposes when offering secondary instruction unless this criterion is met and, therefore, shall not be eligible for Alternative School status.

Criteria and Guidance

Criteria

4. The school will receive current year state assessment scores for their students.
5. The school must intend to serve students in one or more of the following categories that reflect an alternative school setting necessary for these students.

Guidance

In order for a school to apply for Alternative status it has to be in operation and as all Arizona schools, administer the state assessment annually. ***Please note: You shall not be granted alternative school status until the first year of operation.***

70% of the students enrolled by October 1 of the application year (new status only) and each recertification year, shall have been listed in at least one of the categories of students served in an alternative school setting upon ***initial*** enrollment.

Student Population Categories

Category

a) Students who have a documented history of disruptive behavioral issues.

b) Students who have dropped out of school and are now returning.

Documentation Suggestions

1. Suspension records
2. Expulsion records
3. Referrals – Threat of Suspension
4. Documented relevant IEP
5. Transcript
6. Behavior Report
7. Behavior Intervention Plan

This can be verified by a withdraw code from the previous school and enrolled with a corresponding 'E' code. The time between the student dropping out of school and returning shall be no less than 30 days .

Student Population Categories

Category

- c) Students in poor academic standing as demonstrated by being at least one year behind on academic credits or grade level performance.**

- d) Students who are primary caregivers or are financially responsible for dependents and, therefore, may require a flexible school schedule.**

Documentation Suggestions

- Measured on the Reading and/or Mathematics portions of the state assessment.
- Measured on a valid and reliable pre-test for reading and/or mathematics. (i.e., standardized placement test).
- Academic transcripts.

- Signed and dated documentation from parent, guardian, or student of legal age.
- McKinney-Vento form.

Student Population Categories

Category

e) Students who are adjudicated.

Documentation Suggestions

- Documentation provided by the Arizona justice system or the probation officer (e.g., enrollment form, enrollment hearing).
- Request for records from a juvenile detention center school
- Transcript showing credits from a juvenile detention center school

Criteria and Guidance

Criteria

6. All new and converted schools shall be audited for student enrollment verification prior to confirmation of alternative status. All other alternative schools will be subject to an audit of enrollment counts as deemed necessary by the ADE and/or ASBCS.

Guidance

“New” alternative school means that the school has acquired an entity ID number for the first time. “Converted” school is an indication that the school has an entity ID but was not listed as an alternative school the year prior.

Based on the audit report, schools could be denied alternative status.

- ***FY14 Exception:*** *An exception to this requirement will only occur with the caveat that since FY14 is the first year of this requirement, the schools that failed to meet the 70% enrollment requirement in FY14 will be audited in FY15. If the school fails to meet this requirement in FY15 then they will be denied alternative school status at that time.*

REQUIREMENTS

Requirements

- Existing alternative schools must recertify each fiscal year.
- Must fill out the online application and upload their mission statement.
- Must include total enrollment of students as of October 1st of current school year **and** the number of students by **category** based on their *initial* enrollment.
- Must select ‘Credit Recovery’ to be eligible for the Title 1 exemption from the Focus school criteria for traditional schools.
- Every school may appeal any substantive issue that affects their accountability measures for the current year – including denial of alternative school status.

• CERTIFICATION OF STUDENT POPULATION

To complete this section, please include those students who are enrolled as of October 1 of the current fiscal year and count each student only once. Indicate below which category the students were listed under upon initial enrollment. Note: You must enter a number (0-999,999) in each field.

- Number of students who have a documented history of disruptive behavioral issues.*

- Number of students who have dropped out of school and are now returning.*

- Number of students in poor academic standing as demonstrated by being at least one year behind on academic credits or grade level performance.*

- Number of students who are primary caregivers or are financially responsible for dependents that may require a flexible school schedule.*

- Number of students who are adjudicated.*

- Total number of students enrolled as of October 1st of the current school year.*

TIMELINE

Timeline – FY14

January 27	Present to the State Board as informational only.
January 28 – February 7	Vet the definition, requirements, and application process to the field for comments.
February 24	Incorporate feedback from the field and present to the State Board for a motion to proceed.
March 1 – April 1	Upon action from the State Board the online annual application will be posted for applicants.
April 1 – May 15	Enrollment verification audits will be conducted of new schools, converted schools, and any existing schools that the ADE and ASBCS deem necessary. <i>Please note: In FY14, failure to meet the 70% enrollment criteria will result in a 'probational' alternative school status and will be audited the following year to confirm the enrollment for FY15.</i>
May	Schools will be notified of their status for the current school year accountability season.

Timeline – FY15 and beyond

October 1 – November 1	Online annual application will be posted for applicants.
November 1 – February 28	Enrollment verification audits will be conducted of new schools, converted schools, and any existing schools that the ADE and ASBCS deem necessary.
March 1 – March 30	Schools will be notified of their status for the current school year accountability season.

RECAP OF ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL STUDENT POPULATION

Recap of Definition

The school must intend to serve students in one or more of the following categories:

- Students who have a documented history of disruptive behavior issues.
- Students who have dropped out of school and are now returning.
- Students in poor academic standing as demonstrated by being at least one year behind on academic credits or grade level performance.
- Students who are primary caregivers or are financially responsible for dependents and, therefore, may require a flexible school schedule.
- Students who are adjudicated.

Thank you

Dr. Carrie L. Giovannone
Deputy Associate Superintendent
Research & Evaluation

Achieve@azed.gov